DEPRESSION

Depression involves: feelings of sadness and/or hopelessness, difficulties concentrating, memory problems, decreased sexual interest, social withdrawal, unexplained exhaustion, excessive worry, suicidal thinking, lack of interest or motivation, and changes in appetite and sleep. If you experience these symptoms, then you may be suffering form depression.

Techniques for Coping with Depression:

1. Be Self-Aware: Make time to reflect on your emotional and physical wellbeing. Being aware of early signs of depression will allow you to use coping strategies preemptively.

2. Deal with Stressors: Stress often contributes to depression. Take strides to minimize stress in your daily life through being organized and sticking to a routine or schedule. Make sure that you allow time for self-care and relaxation and that you are dealing with stress appropriately.

3. Be Positive: Take time everyday to think about the good things in your life. These positive thoughts can range from simple experiences to significant accomplishments. Make sure you highlight at least three positive things that happened each day.

1. Be Realistic: Setting unrealistic goals or expectations can cause disappointment. Thinking realistically reduces negative feelings and helps you achieve a sense of accomplishment more often. These goals also provide you with a sense of purpose.
2. Sleep Well: Create a healthy sleep cycle. Go to bed early to ensure that you can get enough rest and avoid sleeping during the day as it will disrupt your sleep cycle.
3. Have Fun: Make sure that you schedule fun and enjoyable activities into every day. Listen to your favorite music, play games, go to a movie, take the dog for a walk, develop a new hobby. Whatever it is, make sure that you have a little fun each day.
4. Exercise: Exercise releases endorphins, which help you feel happy and energized. It also keeps your body healthy and helps prevent illness.
5. Be Social: Hanging out with friends is a powerful mechanism for wellbeing. Take time to connect with the people you care about and make new friends regularly. It will make you feel supported and will help to reinvigorate your spirits.
6. Live For Today: Worrying about the future is unproductive and can weigh you down.
7. Eat Right: Make sure that you are eating well-balanced and nutritious meals every day.
8. Relax: Relaxation is more than watching TV or reading a book, it involves calming your mind and actively de-stressing. Learn to relax.
9. Journal: Keeping a journal provides you with a strategy for processing and making sense of your thoughts and feelings. It’s also a great way to vent pent up emotions.
10. Stay Sober: Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant and it can actually deepen feelings of depression. Limiting your alcohol consumption is important if you are feeling depressed.
11. Spirituality: What do you believe? Are you living your life in a way that suits your values and beliefs? Get in touch with your spirituality.
12. Furry Love: Animals are a great source of unconditional love and support. Owning a pet also give you a sense of responsibility and purpose.
13. Get Things Done: The more you procrastinate, the worse you feel about yourself and the less motivated you feel. Staying on top of daily tasks and work responsibilities relieves a great deal of stress and prevents you from feeling overwhelmed and shutting down.
14. Be Nice to Yourself: Daily affirmations are a great way for you to remind yourself of your positive qualities and the good things in your life.
15. Learn to Let Go: There are things in life that you can’t change. Trying to change them will only cause frustration. Accepting things as they are can be extremely healing.
16. Laugh: Laughter is truly the best medicine.
17. Give Back: Happiness studies consistently show that providing service to others is a key factor in feeling good. Make time to volunteer or do nice things for the people in your life. It will make you feel better.
18. Be Assertive: Do not be a doormat. Develop confidence to stand up for yourself and ask for the things that you need.
19. Light Up Your Life: Use full spectrum lighting to help you through the winter blues.
20. Get Help: There are some things that you can’t do on your own. Reaching out for help may be difficult, but talking to a professional psychologist can be incredibly helpful. Accessing help through individual counselling, support groups, and medical consultation (prescription for trial of antidepressants) can be very instrumental towards your healing. And in the event of an emergency, talk to staff at the 24 Hour Distress Line (ph. 780-482-4357).